

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 have been canceled. Claims 8-19 are new and are supported by the written description and figures.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. §112

According to page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-4, 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 because the terms “feed direction” and “an oblique alignment” were deemed incomplete. Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 have been canceled and new base claims 8 and 16 define the “feed direction” as the direction in which a workpiece is fed into the device and the “oblique alignment” is defined as being oblique relative to the feed direction. Support for “a feed direction for feeding a workpiece into the device” can be found in at least [0004], [0009] and Figs. 1, 2 and 5 of the specification. Support for “an oblique alignment with the feed direction” can be found in at least [0011] and Figs. 2-5 of the specification.

The Office further states that the terms “a differing path delay” and “can be compensated” are incomplete. The terms are not found in new claims 8-19.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. §103

According to page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-4, 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hessemann (4,601,134) in view of Kriepe (DE 3,933,697). Specifically, the Office Action states that Hessemann discloses a sanding apparatus with pressure pads for adjusting local pressure of the sanding belt, and Kriepe discloses a sanding apparatus having a sanding belt adjustably oriented at an oblique angle relative to the feed direction, and that it would have been obvious to make the sanding head in Hessemann adjustable to vary the cross-feed angle for controlling the sanding process.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that new claims 8-19 are patentable over the cited references. New independent claims 8 and 16 include limitations that are fully supported by the specification. Support can be found in at least: a feed table ([0003] and Figs. 3-5 at 15); defining a feed direction for feeding a workpiece into the device ([0004], [0009] and Figs. 2 and 5); a sanding unit ([0012] and Figs. 3-4); a sanding belt (Figs. 3-5 at 11); a segmented sanding pad ([0011] and Figs. 3-4 at 13); a plurality of rotatable sanding pad

segments ([0011] and Figs. 3-4 at 12); a plurality of contact rollers ([0011] and Figs. 3-4 at 14); movable between a perpendicular alignment (Fig. 1) with the feed direction and an oblique alignment (Fig. 4) with the feed direction; wherein the plurality of contact rollers move in parallel with the sanding unit (Fig. 4); wherein a path distance between each one of the plurality of sanding pad segments and each one of the corresponding plurality of contact rollers is the same when the sanding unit is in both the perpendicular alignment and the oblique alignment with the feed direction (Fig. 4); wherein the sanding pad segments remain parallel with the feed direction in both the first and second positions and positions therebetween (Fig. 3-4).

Applicants submit that the combination of Hesseman's belt grinder including detection device 11 and Kriepe's multi-head wood sanding machine would not produce the invention as claimed. Specifically, the combination of the references would produce an angled belt with a surface height determining apparatus and the references do not disclose or arguably suggest that the sanding pads rotate relative to the belt to remain parallel to the feed direction. The new claims includes the limitation that the sanding pads be rotatable and when moved to the oblique position are not only angled but also remain parallel to the feed direction, which is clearly shown in Figs. 3-4. Hesseman's sanding pads do not rotate, and if moved to an angled position relative to the feed direction would not remain parallel to the feed direction. Kriepe does not include sanding pads of any kind. Thus, the new claims go well beyond the teachings of the prior art in that when the sanding pads are moved to an oblique angle they are collectively angled parallel to the belt but remain oriented parallel to the feed direction.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that the new claims 8-19 are patentable over Hesseman and Kriepe.

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned directly to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite allowance of the application. If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response not already accounted for, the Examiner is authorized to charge any such fee to Deposit Account No. 01-0265. If a petition for an extension of time and fee not already accounted for is required, such petition is hereby made and the Examiner is likewise authorized to charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 01-0265. Any overpayment or refund should be credited to Deposit Account No. 01-0265.

Respectfully submitted,

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